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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC
INFO RUMIBX/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
RUMJFS/AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
RUHHHQA/CINCPAC FOR POLAD
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 27185

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Jan Isenberg DATE 10/5/81
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SUBJ: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: MAY 29 AND 30 SESSIONS

REF: SAIGON 26918 - Pol 14 Viets

1. ASSEMBLY BEGAN DEBATE ON DIRECTORATE PROPOSALS WITH REGARD TO PRESIDENTIAL AND SENATORIAL ELECTION LAWS (REFTEL). THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE DISAGREEMENT OVER WHETHER DIRECTORATE LETTER WAS MERELY A MESSAGE OUTLINING ITS

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VIEWS ON ELECTION LAWS OR A FORMAL REQUEST FOR AMENDMENT REQUIRING ACTION BY THE ASSEMBLY. ANOTHER COMPLICATING FACTOR MENTIONED BY SEVERAL DEPUTIES WAS THAT ONE OF DIRECTORATE'S PROPOSALS PERTAINS TO A LAW WHICH NA HAS ALREADY ADOPTED, THE OTHER APPLIES TO ONE STILL BEING DEBATED. THE SITUATION, ARGUED JUDGE PHAM DINH-HUNG, CALLS FOR TWO SEPARATE MESSAGES FROM DIRECTORATE.

2. THERE WAS SOME DEBATE ON SUBSTANCE OF DIRECTORATE PROPOSALS. DR. DAN AND NGUYEN HUU CHUNG SUGGESTED THAT NUMBER OF POPULARLY ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES REQUIRED FOR INTRODUCTION OF PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE BE REDUCED FROM 30 TO 10 OR 15. HARDLY ANY DEPUTIES PROPOSED THAT PROVISION BE DROPPED COMPLETELY.

3. DEBATE OVER HOW TO HANDLE DIRECTORATE'S COMMUNICATION RAN ON INTO MAY 30 SESSION. CHAIRMAN SUU FINALLY DECIDED TO POSTPONE FURTHER DEBATE UNTIL JUNE 2. IN MEANWHILE SUU WILL WRITE LETTER TO DIRECTORATE IN ATTEMPT TO CLARITY WAY IN WHICH ITS PROPOSALS ARE TO BE HANDLED.

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4. ON MAY 29, BEFORE DISCUSSING DIRECTORATE LETTER, ASSEMBLY COMPLETED ARTICLE BY ARTICLE DEBATE OF UPPER HOUSE LAW AND WILL BEGIN REVIEW OF LAW JUNE 2. TEXT OF FINAL THREE ARTICLES AS APPROVED BY ASSEMBLY WILL BE TRANSMITTED SEPTEL.

5. COMMENT: NA'S DIFFICULTIES IN HANDLING DIRECTORATE LETTER IN LARGE MEASURE EXPLAINED BY FACT THAT PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION LAW IS FIRST PIECE OF LEGISLATION UNDER NEW CONSTITUTION. MOREOVER, CONSTITUTION ITSELF NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR ON PROCEDURES APPLYING TO SPECIAL LEGISLATION DURING TRANSITIONAL PHASE.

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INCOMING TELEGRAM Department of State

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 27186

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1. PRIME MINISTER KY HELD DINNER MEETING MAY 29 WITH LEADERS OF POLITICAL GROUPS WHICH ARE PLANNING TO SUPPORT HIS CANDIDACY FOR PRESIDENT. REPRESENTED WERE GREATER SOLIDARITY FORCES (NORTHERN CATHOLIC), NATIONAL UNION PARTY (SOUTHERN CATHOLIC), CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT PARTY (MIXED

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CATHOLIC), NGUYEN TUONG TAM FACTION OF VNQDD, AND ONE HOA HAO FACTION REPRESENTED BY COL BUI VAN MANH OF PEOPLE'S ARMY COUNCIL. TRAN QUOC BUU OF CVT ALSO PRESENT BUT NOT YET CLEAR WHAT ROLE BUU AND CVT MAY TAKE RE KY'S CANDIDACY. (ONE CAO DAI FACTION HAD REPORTEDLY BEEN INVITED BUT CAO DAIS HAVE BEEN HAVING MEETINGS IN TAY NINH THIS WEEK.) OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE WERE GENERAL NGUYEN BAO TRI, KY'S SPECIAL ASSISTANT DR NGUYEN HUU CHI, AND ANOTHER KY AIDE, LE VAN TIEN (AKA NHU PHONG).

2. ACCORDING TO NGUYEN GIA KIEN, CHAIRMAN OF GREATER SOLIDARITY FORCES (GSF), KY'S APPARENT PURPOSE IN HOLDING MEETING WAS TO BRING TOGETHER THOSE ELEMENTS ALREADY FIRMLY IN HIS CAMP AND PROVIDE STIMULUS FOR THEM TO BEGIN ORGANIZATIONAL WORK. KIEN STATED THAT WORKING GROUP REPRESENTING ALL ELEMENTS WILL BEGIN PLANNING TODAY (MAY 30) AND CONTINUE AS LONG AS NECESSARY TO DRAW UP ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE, PREPARE PROGRAM AND BEGIN WORKING

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ON OTHER POLITICAL GROUPS WHICH MIGHT BE DRAWN INTO KY CAMP. KY HAS PROVIDED GROUP WITH RECENTLY REFURBISHED HOUSE ON GROUNDS OF ONE OF GVN'S OFFICIAL RESIDENCES IN SAIGON.

3. KY TOOK SOFT LINE WITH PARTICIPANTS, HIEN STATED, AND LET OTHERS DO MOST OF THE TALKING. KY DID PROVIDE GENERAL VIEW OF HIS OWN IDEAS BUT INDICATED HE WILL ALLOW HIS SUPPORTERS A RELATIVELY FREE HAND IN DEVELOPING ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND RUNNING THE CAMPAIGN ORGANIZATION. HIEN ALSO SAID THAT ALTHOUGH NOT MUCH ATTENTION WAS GIVEN TO IT AT MEETING, ONE OF KY'S PRIMARY OBJECTIVES IS KY-SPONSORED AND SUPPORTED SLATE OF CANDIDATES FOR BOTH HOUSES OF LEGISLATURE WHO WOULD RIDE WITH HIM TO VICTORY.

4. COMMENT: OF THE GROUPS AND FACTIONS REPRESENTED, ONLY CVT AND GREATER SOLIDARITY FORCES APPEAR TO HAVE CURRENTLY VIABLE AND ACTIVE ORGANIZATIONS. NATIONAL UNION AND

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CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT PARTIES ARE KNOWN TO BE BADLY ORGANIZED, HAVE FEW MEMBERS, AND EVEN THEIR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES DO NOT MEET REGULARLY. COL NAMH PROBABLY HAS LITTLE FOLLOWING AMONG HOA HAO. (HOWEVER, KY IS BELIEVED TO HAVE STRONG HOA HAO SUPPORT THROUGH OTHER HOA HAO LEADERS.) TAM'S VNQDD FACTION IS KNOWN TO BE ACTIVE BUT THUS FAR IT IS DIFFICULT TO ASSESS ITS POTENTIAL.

5. TRAN QUOC BUU AND CVT HAVE PROBABLY NOT YET DECIDED WITH WHOM THEY WILL THROW IN THEIR LOT. BUU MAY BE LEANING TOWARD KY, AS EVIDENCED BY HIS PRESENCE AT KY'S DINNER MEETING, BUT WE KNOW THAT BUU ATTENDED ONLY AT PRIME MINISTER'S LAST MINUTE INSISTENCE.

6. KY HAS BEEN MEETING WITH OTHER GROUPS AND LEADERS AND ACTIVELY WOOING THE ELECTORATE WITH SUCH GESTURES AS THE "RICE BONUS" AND THE PROMISE OF A RETURN OF THE CHINESE CONGREGATION PROPERTIES (SAIGON 26673). SO FAR HE HAS EVIDENTLY MADE LITTLE EFFORT TO UNITE HIS SUPPORTERS IN ONE ORGANIZATION. THUS "FRONT". MAY BE INTENDED TO SERVE AS THE NUCLEUS FOR SUCH AN ORGANIZATION IT MAY ALSO BE THAT KY INTENDS TO FORM NO SINGLE ORGANIZATION BUT WILL SEEK THE BACKING OF A VARIETY OF FACTIONS AND FRONTS IN A "NOMINATING CONVENTION."

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